

(Washington, DC)— A provision secured by Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.) to benefit the Menomonee Valley was included in the fiscal year 2010 Department of the Interior and Environment Appropriations Act that passed the House of Representatives today. Menomonee Valley Partners will receive \$300,000 to support their ongoing efforts to construct the Hank Aaron State Trail, a part of the larger Urban Forestry Project that is transforming the Menomonee River Valley into a business and environmentally-friendly community. Specifically, these funds would be used to purchase native trees, shrubs and grasses for a major segment of the Hank Aaron State Trail that runs along 2,000 feet of the Menomonee River.

“The Menomonee River Valley is on its way to reclaiming its livelihood,” Rep. Moore said. “What was once an important center of commerce from the time of Native American tribes to early 20th century industries is on its way back. By redeveloping the Menomonee River Valley into a place where business, parks, green space and other public infrastructure intersect, Menomonee Valley Partners is working to create hundreds of jobs and a renewed appreciation for the Milwaukee area’s natural resources.”

Since Milwaukee was first settled, the 1,200-acre Menomonee River Valley has served as an important center of commerce. Valley companies once employed thousands of workers. However, the Valley was largely abandoned later in the 20th century when the modern interstate system moved economic activity away from the city’s center.

This Urban Forestry Project, including the Hank Aaron State Trail, is transforming the area into a 60-acre industrial business center that will support 1,200 area jobs. There will also be a 60-acre community park, 20-acres of streets and other public infrastructure. The Hank Aaron State Trail will run 14 miles in total, and will serve 415,000 residents. Seven miles of this trail is already complete, and runs from Milwaukee’s lakefront to Miller Park.

The Hank Aaron State Trail will include bike and pedestrian paths, linkages to adjacent communities, enhanced river access, and expanded greenspace.

The fiscal year 2010 Department of the Interior and Environment Appropriations Act is an annual measure that helps protect the nation’s air, clean its waters and restore its lands. This year’s measure included \$667 million to protect the nation’s great bodies of water, including the Great Lakes. Specifically, \$475 million was included for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

The bill will now go to the Senate for its consideration.

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